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REF: EXCOM 81-9003 dated 9 April.

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FOR THE 15 APRIL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING.
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FORM NO. 1-67 237 Use previous editions (40)

*Background
on Vacancy
Notice
System*



Vacancy Notice System

Background

1. A vacancy notice system has existed in the Agency since the early 1970s when one Directorate devised it for their own purpose. The idea was adopted for Agency-wide use in January 1973 as a voluntary management system to:

- promote optimum use of existing human resources; and
- make information about assignment opportunities available to as many employees as possible.

The original concept evolved through use and experience into a three-tiered system which allowed advertising of selected positions at the component, Directorate, or Agency levels, or at all three levels depending on Career Service policies. Because many positions are unique and involve special training, exceptional qualifications or sensitivity, and because effective planning for personnel developments results in the selection of specific assignments for personnel to provide growth opportunities, managers were allowed the discretion, until June 1980, to select the appropriate level of advertisement. It was implicit in the system that an Agency-wide notice would be issued only when no qualified candidate could be identified within the component or the Career Service with the vacancy. In this way, the Career Services were able to continue providing suitable development opportunities for their personnel in accordance with their responsibility to do so.

2. The effectiveness of the system has been examined by numerous groups including the IG, MAGs, NAPA, and OPPPM. All of these groups have endorsed the concept of a vacancy notice system, sometimes proposing conceptual changes but usually mostly procedural changes in response to actual or perceived problems. The most common complaints throughout the years related to distribution and confusion as to the different levels of advertisement. Other complaints centered around employee perceptions that the jobs were already filled by a pre-selected candidate (an accurate one in cases where Directorates required advertisement regardless of the plan to fill the position from within) and managerial concerns about their offices being "raided."

3. In June 1980, as the result of recommendations made by OPPPM and the PMAB, and endorsed by the Executive Committee, the following changes were made to the vacancy notice system:

- The system was automated to provide for electronic, rather than manual, transmission of notices.
- A time limit was placed on a release date for employees selected for advertised vacancies.

- Publication of notices between Career Services for certain categories was made mandatory.
- Employees were required to serve a minimum of six months in a position before seeking reassignment or applying for an Agency-wide vacancy.
- The application period was reduced to two weeks from three.

At the same time, Agency-wide notices were required for certain occupational categories when there was no qualified candidate from within the component or Career Service. This procedure was to be implemented gradually for the following categories:

- Inspector;
- EEO Specialist;
- Secretary and Administrative Assistant GS-08 and above (unless a qualified but unassigned GS-08 or above employee is available);
- Records Administration Officer;
- Information Control Assistant and Information Control Clerk, GS-06 and above;
- Data processing personnel. Implementation of this portion has not occurred due to the temporary suspension of the system in January 1981.

The current procedure is shown in the attachment.

Conclusion

1. Given the dual orientation of this system -- managerial use of existing resources and employee opportunity to advance and develop -- it is to be expected that it will sometimes serve one group better than another. Since implementation of the Agency level of advertisement, historical data shows that about 65% to 70% of the notices published are for clerical positions. Since this group of employees generally has limited opportunities for career development, this system has allowed many clericals to gain additional, broadening, and/or developmental opportunities. In times of clerical shortages, or presidentially-imposed freezes, this movement of course becomes a "problem."

2. From 1973 through Calendar Year 1979, a total of [] applications were submitted for the [] vacancy notices published Agency-wide. More than 1,400 employees obtained reassignments through this system during that period. In 1980, 2,488 applications were submitted for 1,229 notices. To date, 523 employees have been selected for these vacancies. The statistics suggest that the system is serving both management and employees well.

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Attachment

Current Practices

Individual Notices

- The need for and, except for those categories required at certain levels, the level of distribution are determined by the component manager. A notice may be published either at the component, Directorate, or Agency level only or at all three levels sequentially.
- The component manager and/or the component Personnel Officer prepare a draft of the Agency-wide notice in a prescribed format to meet the requirements of the automated system and forwards it to the OPPPM.
- OPPPM verifies the accuracy of the title, grade, and organizational location with the Staffing Complement and reviews the description of the duties and requirements to insure that they are generally in line with standards. In cases where new, but not yet established positions are being advertised, the validity of the position, its grade, title, etc. are determined prior to publication.
- A deadline date is assigned by OPPPM which is two weeks from the publication date.

Publication and Distribution

- Usually within 24 hours of receipt of the draft, the notices are sent on a VM terminal for electronic transmission to 9 Data Access Centers in various Agency buildings. Where a DAC does not exist, provision has been made for courier delivery.
- Component Personnel Officers pick up their copy(ies) on computer paper at a designated DAC, and are expected to provide wide and speedy distribution throughout their components.

Application

- Employees submit their applications to their component Personnel Officer who forwards them to the advertising component Personnel Officer who then orders the Official Personnel Folder (OPF) for review.

Selection Process

- The component official determines whether an interview is appropriate and arrangements are made directly with the applicant's Personnel Officer.

- The selectee for the vacancy is advised through his/her component Personnel Officer of this decision and the gaining and losing Personnel Officers determine the release date. Those not selected are advised by the advertising component.

Release Date

- The employee is to be released as soon as possible for the new assignment but no later than six weeks from notification of selection for the position.